

Inspection of Sharnbrook Academy

Odell Road, Sharnbrook, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK44 1JL

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils are happy at Sharnbrook Academy. They are keen to share the many things they like about their school. The majority of pupils feel safe. They know there is an adult they can talk to if needed.

Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are respectful and polite to teachers and visitors. Most pupils think that bullying is rare. Some say it never happens. A minority disagree; they also think that teachers do not deal with bullying as well as they might.

Pupils learn a broad range of subjects. In some areas of the curriculum, pupils learn very well. At times, learning is slowed because some teachers do not spot mistakes and gaps in pupils' learning. In the sixth form, students participate enthusiastically because of the high-quality teaching they receive.

Most pupils are very open-minded. They welcome those who are different from them. They like the many clubs and activities the school provides. Pupils produce impressive artwork, which decorates the school. Parents have mixed views about the school. Some are delighted with the education their children receive, while others are less positive.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since joining the Meridian Trust in September 2021, leaders have been implementing a new curriculum. Pupils access a broad curriculum offer and a rich array of subjects in all year groups, including in the sixth form. Around half of pupils choose to learn a foreign language. This provides them with important skills in a global world. An increasing number of pupils access a range of subjects that count towards the requirements of the English Baccalaureate.

Where this curriculum is implemented well, leaders have ensured that learning is broken down into logical steps. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to practise prior learning. This enables pupils to remember important knowledge. In the sixth form, teachers ensure that students develop an understanding of complex concepts. Students demonstrate a range of academic skills, which puts them in good stead for future study and work.

However, in some areas of the curriculum, knowledge does not build so well on what pupils have learned before. Additionally, while some teachers are skilful at identifying pupils' misconceptions and missing knowledge, some teachers are not regularly checking pupils' learning. Some teachers are not aware of where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and learning. As a result of this, these pupils continue to make the same mistakes.

While leaders are currently reviewing the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and are identifying their needs more

accurately, staff do not consistently provide pupils with SEND with the precise support they need. Leaders are, however, beginning to ensure that they have robust systems in place to check regularly how well support is working.

Behaviour around the school is very often calm and orderly. There is a small minority of pupils whose behaviour is more challenging. Most pupils say that teachers deal with negative behaviours well. However, a significant minority of pupils do not feel that teachers deal with bullying, mainly name-calling, appropriately. As a result of this, some pupils continue to experience bullying. Leaders are trying to address the use of derogatory language in school.

Most pupils radiate highly positive values and attitudes, especially around diversity, and say, 'We may look different on the outside but we're all the same on the inside.' They learn in an age-related way how to develop healthy relationships. They are kind and considerate.

While leaders know pupils need to be more aware of how their learning prepares them for potential careers, they do provide rich advice about future options. Careers provision therefore meets the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Leaders support students in the sixth form well to make informed decisions about future study or employment. This ensures they embark on a wide range of professional and educational destinations.

Provision in the school has declined since the previous inspection. However, since taking on the school, the trust has acted swiftly to address the weaknesses. Trust leaders have accurately identified what needs to improve, especially within the realms of the curriculum and SEND provision. Trust staff provide challenge and support to ensure that leaders are taking the right actions for the benefit of pupils. As a result, leaders are in a strong position to make the improvements needed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training so that all know how to identify if a child may be at risk. There is a strong culture of vigilance. Staff report concerns about a pupil's welfare swiftly. Leaders respond appropriately to any concerns. They liaise with a range of outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

Leaders make sure all pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe when online and out of school.

Leaders run meticulous checks on all new members of staff before they join the school to ensure they are suitable to work in schools.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not consistently identify misconceptions, errors and gaps in pupils' learning. As a result of this, some pupils continue to make the same mistakes, and gaps in their learning are not identified. Leaders need to ensure that teachers systematically identify misconceptions and what pupils do not know, so that teachers can provide the necessary support to help pupils improve their learning.
- While leaders have more recently provided teachers with the necessary training and information so that they apply the precise support and strategies to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, this is in the early stages of development. As a result of this, pupils with SEND do not always learn as well as they might. Leaders must ensure teachers fully understand pupils' needs and that they provide the appropriate help. Leaders must also ensure regular review of how support for pupils with SEND is working.
- Leaders are not successfully ensuring that all staff deal with some incidents of bullying involving a minority of pupils. As a result of this, some pupils continue to experience name-calling and intimidation. Leaders must ensure that incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively and consistently by all staff.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136470
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10211214
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1804
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	453
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Shirley Jamieson
Principal	Clare Raku
Website	https://sharnbrook.academy
Date of previous inspection	30 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In 2017, Sharnbrook Academy became an 11-18 school, having previously been a 13-18 upper school.
- Sharnbrook Academy joined the Meridian Trust in September 2021.
- The school makes appropriate use of alternative unregistered provision for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met the chief executive officer of the trust, the executive headteacher, the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, languages, geography and history. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work. They also considered curriculum documentation and spoke to leaders about the curriculum.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record, met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed the school's safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. There were 212 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, 109 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 344 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered 319 free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Adam Cooke, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Hemmings	Her Majesty's Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Marc White	Ofsted Inspector
Shan Oswald	Ofsted Inspector

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